

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today issued the following statement after gaining an influential seat on the powerful House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. The congressman will also continue serving on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies and the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies.

"I am very pleased to be joining the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, which will enable me to secure significant federal funding that will create and protect jobs at local defense-related companies in the congressional district I represent; advance the research and development of solar energy products for defense and commercial applications; and ensure that the forthcoming withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq is carried out in a thoughtful and responsible manner.

"The Defense Appropriations bill is by far the largest funding bill that Congress passes each year and I am looking forward to having a much more direct role in determining how those critical dollars are spent. New York has a significant number of defense-related companies that have consistently produced high quality, state of the art equipment for our military, and as the sole member from New York on the subcommittee I will ensure that the state's interest are well-represented. I intend to use my new position to continue and expand the work of those local companies, which will benefit our troops while also helping to protect and create new jobs for our area.

"This new position will also enable me to help the U.S. become a greater leader in the research and development of solar and other forms of renewable energy products. As the single largest consumer of energy in the world, the U.S. military stands to benefit greatly from investments in solar energy products. A greater commitment to renewable energy will lower the military's operational costs, reduce the frequency that combat troops need to refuel and repower equipment, and help the environment through lower greenhouse gas emissions.

"I'm confident that New York is well-positioned to play a significant role in developing the solar technology needed for the military to become more efficient and effective and I'm looking forward to directing federal funds for that purpose. Over the last two years, I've worked to establish and advance The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) -- an industry-driven, non-profit organization that provides leadership, organization, resources, and support for the establishment of a major solar energy industry cluster in New York. Through federal funding I've secured, TSEC has been able to attract several major solar manufacturers to upstate New

York, which are expected to create hundreds of new jobs over the next several years. I look forward to building on the successes we've already had in upstate New York through my new position on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense.

"With President-elect Obama set to take office in less than two weeks, I am also looking forward to ensuring that the U.S. military has the appropriate resources and oversight needed to carry out a responsible withdrawal of forces from Iraq. Our troops have been unnecessarily forced to continue operations there and it's time to bring them home while also ensuring that our military leaders in Afghanistan have the resources they need. At the same time, I intend to ensure that the U.S. finally puts an end to the illegal detainments at Guantanamo Bay and that the military carries out humane and fair policies that forbid torture and other actions that are inconsistent with the Constitution and the United States' role as a world leader of democracy, freedom, and justice."